



# Fact Sheet:

## Cleanup Activities at Marine Palms Housing Area

### Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command (MAGTFTC)

### Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC)

Final

February 2003

*The MAGTFTC is planning to remove soil in the Marine Palms Housing area that contains polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). This fact sheet has been prepared, along with other technical documents, to inform Marine personnel and their families of these activities. Comments will be accepted from February 20 to March 22, 2003.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Marine Corps and the Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command (MAGTFTC) are committed to protecting the health and well being of our personnel and their families. In keeping with this commitment, this Fact Sheet has been prepared to inform you of the proposed cleanup of soil at the Marine Palms Housing area. The proposed cleanup activities will be conducted under the legal framework of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA).

## BACKGROUND

Beginning in the early 1940s, the Base was operated by the United States Army. The Army built a wastewater treatment facility in the current location of the Marine Palms Housing area. When the Marine Corps took control of the Base in 1953, that facility was demolished and a portion of Marine Palms Housing was constructed on the site. At that time, federal and state law permitted this kind of construction, and no health risks associated with the area were known.

From 1993 to 1996, under State of California review, the Marine Palms Housing area was sampled to determine whether compounds potentially associated with operations at the former wastewater treatment facility were still present in the area. Based on those results, additional sampling was conducted from 1997 to 2001 to determine the extent of PCBs and other compounds in area soils.

It was common in the past to apply waste oils to the ground surface to suppress and control windblown dust. It now is believed that PCB waste was mixed with the waste oil prior to spreading in Marine Palms.

## NEW HOUSING

New housing for junior enlisted Marines aboard the Base remains a priority for the command. As such, current housing in Marine Palms will soon be demolished and replaced with new housing units. To ensure the well being of residents and in keeping with its commitment to environmental stewardship, MAGTFTC is recommending a soil cleanup effort prior to construction of new housing.



Health scientists from the Navy, State of California, and our own contractors have agreed that the average levels of PCBs at the site presented essentially no risk to the previous residents of Marine Palms given the nature and degree of exposure.

## PROPOSED CLEANUP

In consultation with independent experts, toxicologists, engineers, and scientists, the MAGTFTC and the State of California are recommending excavation and disposal of 6,100 yd<sup>3</sup> of soils in the Marine Palms Housing area with PCB levels greater than 1 mg/kg. This approach is protective of human health, complies with applicable regulations, and is very effective.

To support the cleanup recommendation, MAGTFTC and the State of California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) have prepared three documents required under the CERCLA legal framework and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): an Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA), an Action Memorandum, and a Negative Declaration. The EE/CA summarizes past environmental activities at the Marine Palms Housing area (referred to as Installation Restoration, or IR, Site 6), identifies cleanup objectives, evaluates potential cleanup methods, and identifies the preferred approach. The Action Memorandum is a legal document that specifies the cleanup action that will be taken. The Negative Declaration provides the results of an assessment performed by DTSC to ensure that the proposed cleanup action will not negatively impact the environment. Prior to making a final decision on the cleanup approach, the public is encouraged to review and comment on these documents and on the proposed cleanup approach.

## What Are PCBs?

PCBs are mixtures of synthetic organic chemicals that range from oily liquids to waxy solids. However, these chemicals all have the same basic chemical structure and similar physical properties. PCBs have been used in hundreds of industrial and commercial applications including electrical, heat transfer, and hydraulic equipment; as plasticizers in paints, plastics, and rubber products; in pigments, dyes, and carbonless copy paper; and many other applications. The most commonly observed health effects in humans exposed to large amounts of PCBs are skin conditions, such as acne and rashes. PCBs have been shown to cause cancer in animals and therefore are considered a probable cancer causing agent in humans. PCBs have also been shown to cause a number of non-cancerous health effects in animals, including effects on the immune system, reproductive system, nervous system, and endocrine system. For more information on PCBs go to <http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/pcb>, or call the Federal Environmental Protection Agency CERCLA Hotline at 1-800-424-9346.

*This fact sheet is designed to inform interested parties about cleanup efforts designed to reduce risks resulting from exposure to polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). As appropriate, fact sheets such as this one will be distributed in order to keep individuals informed about risk reduction efforts, continued studies, and in response to community interest. Distribution is coordinated through the MCAGCC Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Office, (760) 830-7396.*

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments on the cleanup approach and technical documents (EE/CA, Action Memorandum, and Negative Declaration) will be accepted from February 20, 2003 through March 22, 2003. The draft EE/CA and draft Action Memorandum can be viewed at the MCAGCC Web site or at the MCAGCC Library:

Web site address: <http://www.29palms.usmc.mil/MiscMenu/site6>

Combat Center Library  
Building 1528, MAGTFTC MCAGCC  
Twentynine Palms, California 92278

The draft Negative Declaration can be viewed on the DTSC Web site or at the DTSC Cypress office:

Web site address: <http://www.dtsc.ca.gov>

DTSC Cypress Office  
5796 Corporate Avenue  
Cypress, California 90630

Written comments must be postmarked or emailed by March 22, 2003. Comments on the draft EE/CA and Action Memorandum should be sent to Mr. Leon Bowling at the address below. Comments on the draft Negative Declaration should be sent to Mr. Douglas Bautista at the address below.

## CONTACTS

For additional information, please contact:

Mr. Leon Bowling  
Natural Resources/Environmental Affairs Directorate  
Building 1451, MCAGCC, Box 788110  
Twentynine Palms, California 92278-8110  
(760) 830-7396 (extension 250)

Mr. Douglas Bautista  
Department Of Toxic Substances Control  
5796 Corporate Avenue  
Cypress, California 90630  
(714) 484-5442  
email: [dbautist@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:dbautist@dtsc.ca.gov)